

TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM of TEXAS

UPDATE

VIEW EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SCREEN IMPROVEMENTS

To help Reporting Employers (REs), TRS has been making improvements to the RE Portal. In the most recent round of maintenance upgrades, TRS added many features to the 'View Employee Information' screen. These enhancements are meant to make the screen more powerful and give the REs more information to help report members accurately.

To help navigate and explain these enhancements in more detail, we have created and posted some reference guides for both active and retired TRS members:

[Active member View Employee Information reference guide](#)

[Retired member View Employee Information reference guide](#)

VERIFY MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY ERRORS

If you receive errors 570 or 573 in the RE Portal, these notify an RE that they are reporting an employee as working hours that do not correspond to the member's TRS eligibility status.

Error 570: "Please verify TRS membership eligibility for this employee. Based on prior reporting, employee may be in a TRS-eligible position since the hours reported are one half or more of the full-time equivalent. If you feel the reported information related to this error is correct, please contact TRS."

Error 573: "Please verify TRS membership eligibility for this employee. Based on prior reporting, the hours reported are less than half of the full-time equivalent. If you feel the reported information related to this error is correct, please contact TRS."

When these errors occur, the RE needs to verify that the reported hours are correct and determine if the employee's membership eligibility needs to be reevaluated.

If the hours are correct, the person's eligibility has not changed, and the change in hours is temporary, an override will need to be processed to allow the records to post. As documentation for the override request, you will be asked to provide answers to the following questions to your coach:

- How many hours per week is this employee hired to work?
- What is the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) of the position the employee is in (FTE must be listed as 00 if there is no FTE for the position, or between 30-40 hours per week if there is an FTE for the position)?
- Provide an explanation for why hours are more or less than expected for this report month (ex. Unpaid holidays, unpaid leave, temporary increase or decrease in workload, etc.).
- Provide a statement of when the employee is returning to agreed-upon hours.

Email the answers to these questions for each person receiving the above errors to your reporting coach. This will enable your coach to create and submit the override in a timely manner.

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HIGHER EDUCATION – FISCAL YEAR 2020 PROPORTIONALITY

As another fiscal year closes, higher education employers will begin to create and submit the APS 011 Proportionality reports to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA), as well as to TRS. When submitting the reports to TRS, please send them via email to reporting@trs.texas.gov. Include the four-digit TRS reporting number and the fiscal year.

The reports are compiled and sent to the Texas CPA's office for confirmation in the spring following the close of the fiscal year. TRS cannot provide instructions on credits due from TRS or adjustments due to TRS until after the Texas CPA office approves the amounts.

RECONCILING YOUR MONTHLY BILL

It is critical to reconcile your TRS-ActiveCare bill each month to make sure the enrollment and billing information is correct. This process will help protect your district from unexpected premium charges or credits. It also identifies enrollment discrepancies – and we can work with you to correct them.

How Should You Report Discrepancies?

Report billing discrepancies on the template located in the bswift portal. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) will work with bswift and tell you what actions to take before the next bill. Please send billing reconciliations before the third week of the month to be sure the correction is on the next bill. It is important to make sure any updates are correct in your enrollment portal and on the electronic file, too.

When Should You Report Discrepancies?

If you find an issue with your bill for an enrollment record, you should report it immediately. Your bswift Benefits Administrator (BA) Advocate can help find the root cause, or provide any additional information you need. TRS allows districts to submit transactions up to 45 days from the effective date of coverage. If you are reporting anything after the 45-day administrative period, the transaction is not updated unless TRS approves it as an exception. You can find membership processing guidelines on page 41 of the [TRS Administrative Guide](#).

The membership processing window for the Sept. 1, 2020 effective date closes on Oct. 15, 2020.

Did you know you can take advantage of reporting in bswift to audit your records between bills? Review the bswift user guide for reporting options or contact your bswift BA Advocate.

TRS Exceptions and Tracker

Only TRS can make exceptions to approve requests for updates outside the 45-day membership processing guidelines, and elections outside of enrollment windows. TRS only grants exceptions for a “good cause”. Please consider this before submitting information.

The tracker feature in bswift is only used to submit exceptions. Please direct any other requests to your bswift BA Advocate. These are some important reminders about exceptions:

- Use the tracker for exceptions only.
- Provide and attach all necessary documentation when you submit the request.
- Make sure your employee is aware that backdated changes could mean they owe more in premiums.
- Fill out the entire tracker form, including the exception questionnaire.
- At the time of submission, the “Assigned to User” **must** be [Request, Exception](#).

If an employee record exists in bswift, submit exceptions from the employee record. Submit new member records from the BA level.

- Be sure to include your email address to receive notification of ticket statuses.

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RECONCILING YOUR MONTHLY BILL *continued from page 2*

What about Urgent Access Issues?

Enter transactions into bswift or send transactions on the electronic file to bswift. Then bswift will transfer the information to BCBSTX, Caremark and the HMOs. We understand that timing could affect TRS participants at times. If you have an urgent need, please contact your bswift BA Advocate for a temporary update. Your bswift BA Advocate will need documentation of the enrollment to make an update. As a reminder, this is a temporary update. The eligibility update needs to be included on the next electronic file to be a permanent update.

Your bswift BA Advocate team is available to assist you. We work closely with bswift and each Third Party Claims Administrator (TPA) in an effort to make enrollment and eligibility run smoothly for each entity within TRS. You may contact them at 1-877-767-5254 or email at TRSBAinquiries@bswift.com.

TRS-CARE INFORMATION SESSIONS THIS FALL FOR RETIRING EMPLOYEES

TRS has been hosting information sessions about the upcoming 2021 TRS-Care plan year. If your district has employees considering retirement in the next year, these sessions explain what their new benefits will be.

If you have employees who are 65+ and retiring, there is a specialty webinar designed to help them understand TRS-Care Medicare Advantage called *TRS-Care Medicare & You*. This can be accessed and shared [here](#).

These sessions may be complete by the time you receive this newsletter, but your employees can still access all the information. Webinar recordings, transcripts and materials are available on www.trs.texas.gov/trs-care2021.

TRS HOLIDAY CLOSURES

TRS will be closed on the following days: **Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020 through Friday, Nov. 27, 2020** in observance of Thanksgiving. We will resume regular business hours on Monday, Nov. 30, 2020.

DEADLINE APPROACHING: PETITIONS FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE POSITION FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TRS is accepting petitions for eligible members to qualify as candidates for the election of the Public School District Employee position on the TRS Board of Trustees. The deadline for receiving these petitions is **Jan. 25, 2021**.

The term of the position begins as early as Sept. 1, 2021 and ends Aug. 31, 2027. An eligible member for this election is a current employee of a public school district, charter school or regional education service center in a TRS-eligible position.

To qualify to be a candidate for nomination, an eligible member must collect 250 signatures from TRS members whose most recent TRS service was performed for a public school district, a charter school or regional education service center. **TRS is offering two ways in which a potential candidate may collect the required 250 signatures.**

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PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE POSITION FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES *continued from page 3*

1) Electronic Petitions – A potential candidate will declare his/her interest to be a nominee to the [Secretary to the Board of Trustees](#). Once the member's eligibility is validated, the member's name will be posted on the [nomination site](#) where the potential candidate may direct members to sign their electronic petition. The names of nominees will be listed on a first-come, first-listed basis. To sign the electronic petition, members will need to provide identifying information in order to verify their eligibility to sign the petition. The process is easy and only takes a few minutes. **For an electronic petition, the potential candidate does not need to submit anything further to TRS but must have 250 member signatures by Jan. 25, 2021 to be considered a candidate.**

2) Paper Petitions – TRS will also continue to allow potential candidates to collect signatures with paper petitions. **TRS must receive a potential candidate's paper petitions, with 250 eligible member signatures, no later than Jan. 25, 2021.** You may download a [petition \(pdf\)](#) from the Resources section on the Nominations for TRS Board of Trustees Public School District Employee Position page on the [TRS website](#). If you do not have access to a printer, please contact the Secretary to the Board of Trustees to request a petition be mailed to you.

WATCH AND LEARN: TRS MEMBER EDUCATION VIDEO SERIES

Learn all about your TRS pension benefits by watching our [Member Education Videos!](#) Help us spread the word about the series by downloading a [poster](#) from our website and displaying it at your school.